



CITY OF DAHLONEGA

Council Work Session Minutes

January 19, 2021, 4:00 p.m.

Gary McCullough Council Chambers, Dahlonega City Hall

<p>PRESENT Mayor Sam Norton Council Member Roman Gaddis Council Member Mitchell Ridley Council Member Ron Larson Council Member JoAnne Taylor Council Member Johnny Ariemma</p>	<p>PRESENT City Clerk Mary Csukas City Manager Bill Schmid Director Mark Buchanan Director Kevin Herrit Program Coord. Lucas Cheney Administration Assistance Skyler Alexander Director Buck McCallister Plant Manager Morgan Caldwell</p>	<p>PRESENT City Attorney Doug Parks Tourism Director Sam McDuffie</p>
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OPEN MEETING

Mayor Norton opened the Work Session at 4:01 p.m.

BOARDS & COMMITTEES:

1. Cemetery Report - December 2020, Chris Worick, Dahlonega Cemetery Committee Chairman

Director Buchanan enlightened the Council on the new Columbarium placed in the Dahlonega Memorial Park Cemetery this past week.

- An agenda topic on the cemetery committee's meeting later this evening includes a discussion surrounding the operation and uses of the Columbarium at Memorial Park Cemetery.
- Mayor Norton requested the cemetery committee discuss the possibility of a columbarium at Mt. Hope Cemetery.

Council discussed the following Columbarium topics:

- The City of Dahlonega is the purveyor of the columbarium units.
- Beautification of the Memorial Park Cemetery is ongoing.
- The safety and security probability of unauthorized access to a columbarium unit was a topic of discussion.

2. Main Street - November 2020, Lucas Cheney, Main Street Project Coordinator

Highlighted items of his report:

- Introduction of Skyler Alexander and Ariel Alexander as Main Street Program / DDA Administration Assistants. This position will focus on event coordination, newsletter, and social media.
- The GEMS program presentation is on March 24, 2021.
- Large festivals are at the mercy of the COVID-19 pandemic.

TOURISM:

3. Tourism Department - December 2020, Sam McDuffie, Tourism Director

- Repairs and maintenance completed to a total of \$10,642 at the Visitors Center; elevator and restroom repairs, updated lighting to LED, and new bathroom locking system.
- The Media One six-week digital marketing campaign to promote Dahlonega as a romantic getaway shows over 20,000 hits; it will complete on February 1.
- Advertisements are live in the Southern Living and the Guns and Garden publication.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

1. City Marshal's Report - December 2020, Jeff Branyon, Chief Marshal

- Council Member Ariemma is interested in the signage inventory in town due to inconsistent yield signs.
- The tag reader installed in the Deputy Marshals SUV is mobile twelve hours a day.
- Deputies patrol hours are 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on weekdays and sporadic hours on the weekend after trail patrol hours.
- Noise complaints are handled with an initial warning and follow-up unless the initial situation is beyond a warning and escalated to the next level.

2. Community Development – December 2020, Kevin Herrit, Director

- Our partnership with GMA to collect insurance fees not paid for the previous year netted \$2000.00.
- Our department identified BRBA and RBB facilities within the City limits; COVID has changed these facilities' dynamics to monthly in many cases.
- The Holiday Inn Express is on target for opening soon; delays were mostly due to the COVID pandemic.
- The Housley property is remanded back to the planning commission for a meeting on February 8, 2021.

3. Financial Services – December 2020, Melody Marlowe, Finance Director

City Manager Schmid stated the financial report stands as is.

4. Public Works - December 2020, Mark Buchanan, PW Director/ City Engineer

- COVID cleaning is now an aspect of the public works crew in the City Parks and City Hall.
- The Wimpy Mill Bridge Project is on target, and the requested ribbon cutting will take place upon completion. A sidewalk project will extend from the Wimpy Bridge Project in the coming months as part of the Master Plan.
- City Manager Schmid praised the Staff for their level of professionalism during this aspect of the Master plan.
- The Wimpy Mill Park bridge project includes an accessible kayak launch that benefits all who visit and live in Dahlonega.

5. Water & Wastewater Treatment Department Report - December 2020, John Jarrard, Water/Wastewater Treatment Director, Buck McCallister, Wastewater Treatment Plant Manager & Morgan Caldwell, Water Treatment Plant Manager

Morgan Caldwell discussed the project to place a roof on the pump house on Crown Mountain.

Buck McCallister outlined projects under his leadership:

- A generator is in for repair, backup generator in its place.
- The dump truck is in for repair, to install a steel lining on the bed.
- The Crown Mountain lift station is up for bids.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. 2021 Municipal Election, Mary Csukas, City Clerk
 - Ms. Csukas requests qualifying fees set at \$144.00 for Council Member and \$277.00 for the Mayor. The qualifying fees requested for the 2021 Municipal Election mirror the 2017 and 2019 Municipal Elections' qualifying fees.
2. Amendment to SDS for Law Enforcement, Bill Schmid, City Manager
 - Amendment to the Service Delivery Strategy with Lumpkin County to increase by \$4000.00; the increase is from \$8,000 to \$12,000. Also, the wording in the second line of the second paragraph will be amended from supplement to supplemental as shown in the original agreement.
3. Appointment - Temporary Council Member, Sam Norton, Mayor

Mayor Norton stated Council accepted applications to fill the Temporary Council Member to Post 2, vacated by Helen Hardman on December 11, 2021.

 - The Nugget publicized the process to fill the Temporary Council Post 2. Mayor Norton thanked the Nugget for keeping this process in the public eye.
 - Seven applicants applied for the position, but only five are current applicants: Joel Cordle, Stan Lewis, Joe Henderson, Zack Tumlin, and Bill Scott.

Mayor Norton discussed the City of Dahlonega Charter that outlines the governing rules that apply to a Temporary Council Member's appointment to a vacated post's unexpired term as follows:

- Sec. 2.11. - Terms and qualifications of office.

Except as otherwise provided in Section 5.10 of this Charter, the terms of office of the Mayor and councilmembers which begin on or after January 1, 2001, shall be for a period of four years and until their respective successors have been elected and qualified. No person shall be eligible to serve as Mayor or councilmember unless he or she: (1) has been a resident of the city for a period of one year immediately prior to the date of his or her election; (2) continues to reside within the city during his or her period of service; (3) is registered and qualified to vote in municipal elections of the City of Dahlonega; and (4) meets the qualification standards required for members of the Georgia House of Representatives as are now or may in the future be prescribed by the Georgia Constitution.

- Sec. 2.12. - Vacancy; forfeiture of office; filling of vacancies.
The office of Mayor or councilman shall become vacant upon the incumbent's death, resignation, forfeiture of office or removal from office in any manner authorized by this Charter or the laws of the State of Georgia.
The Mayor or any councilman shall forfeit his or her office if he or she: (1) lacks at any time during the term of office any qualifications of the office as prescribed by this Charter or the laws of the State of Georgia; (2) willfully and knowingly violates any express prohibition of this Charter; (3) is convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude; or (4) is absent from four consecutive regular meetings of the Council, except if granted leave of absence by the Council which leave shall be entered upon the minutes. A vacancy in the office of Mayor or councilman shall be filled for the remainder of the unexpired term, if any, as provided for in Article V of this Charter.
- Sec. 5.12. - Special elections; vacancies.
In the event that a vacancy occurs in one or more elected offices of the city for any cause whatsoever, the remaining elected officials shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of implementing the terms of this section, and those remaining elected officials shall appoint a qualified person to fill such vacancy or vacancies for the remainder of the unexpired term or terms. No person appointed to fill such a vacancy shall be eligible to run in the next succeeding election for the post held by such appointed person. If a tie vote occurs in regard to filling such vacancy or vacancies, the Mayor, or in the event the Mayor recuses himself or herself or is otherwise incapable of making the selection, or if the position of Mayor is vacant, the mayor pro tempore shall appoint a qualified person to fill the vacancy or vacancies. At no time shall there be more than three members so appointed holding office and, if a vacancy occurs within the three members so appointed on the city council, a special election shall be held by the city at the next available time in compliance with applicable laws, at which election a qualified person shall be elected to serve the remainder of the unexpired term of such vacant office, provide that no such election shall be held if a regular annual election will occur within six months of the date of vacancy.
(1990 Ga. Laws (Act No. 97), page 4534, § 1; 2000 Ga. Laws (Act No. 510), page 3591, § 4; 2010 Ga. Laws (Act No. 354), page 3522, § 1; Act of 5-11-2010)

Council Member Gaddis stated the Charter was amended in 2017 due to two vacated posts with unexpired terms and a mayor's illness, leaving no elected officials' quorum to handle governmental business. The Charter's change, which required the State of Georgia's approval, allowed a remaining governing body to constitute a quorum to appoint a temporary council member to an unexpired post. This change in the Charter also outlined that the appointee shall be ineligible to run for their appointed post at the next election.

4. Resolution 2021-03 Historic Preservation Grant, Kevin Herrit, Community Development Director
 - Community Development is requesting approval of a Historic Preservation Grant from the DCA to fund 60% of the cost of the required Historical survey of the City of Dahlonega. This updated survey will assist HPC when making recommendations that are necessary for the local government HPC.
 - Grants originating from the federal or state government require a resolution from the local governing body to back the grant funds.

5. SPLOST Water and Sewer Line Extension Policy, Bill Schmid, City Manager

- Bill Schmid informed Council that Staff would be accepting proposals from qualified engineering firms to assist with evaluation and prioritizing extension projects of our water and sewer system: this is not an action item at this time. He outlined current areas in town that possible projects for this study.
- In answer to Council's concerns with spending SPLOST on an outside engineering firm, the answer is to save the City Staff's burden. These firms will bring equipment, expertise, labor, and time that we do not have for water and sewer extension projects.
- Council agreed their responsibility is to question the cost and see the future of projects that will assist with growth.

6. Memo Regarding House Bill 879, Doug Parks, City Attorney

This House Bill 879 proposes the following to our alcoholic beverage license:

- Home delivery element by package stores and restaurants.
- Centralized permitting will allow one system for our licensees to obtain the alcoholic beverage license.
- Allow tasting events by package stores.

7. GEMA - Mutual Aid and Assistance Agreement 202, Bill Schmid, City Manager

City Manager Schmid introduced a State-Wide Mutual Agreement with Lumpkin County that is historical and beneficial to the City of Dahlonega; Aid will be given in times of need to neighboring Counties and reciprocated to the City of Dahlonega.

COMMENTS – PLEASE LIMIT TO THREE MINUTES

Clerk Comments - No comments

City Manager Comments – No comments

City Attorney Comments – No comments

Mayor and Council Comments

- Public Health Division 2 struggles with the vaccines due to a shortage of nurses, but administrating vaccines' restrictions do not allow for nursing assistance or nursing students. Georgia residences are allowed to go to neighboring counties for the vaccine.
- Council Member Ariemma wondered if Lumpkin County officials were ready for a possible influx of people from outside counties; the Mayor stated just the opposite our citizens are going elsewhere.
- Council Member Taylor stated that it lists the places administrating the vaccine throughout Georgia on the State Department of Health

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Norton adjourned at 5: 25 p.m.